

DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections

Meeting Minutes

July 20, 2023

Start Time: 4:33 p.m.

End Time: 6:09 p.m.

Board Attendees: Vasu Abhiraman
Nancy Jester
Anthony Lewis
Susan Motter
Karli Swift

Other Attendees: Keisha Smith, Executive Director
Terry Phillips, Deputy County Attorney
Judge Bedelia C. Hargrove

SWEARING-IN OF BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Phillips called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. Judge Hargrove swore in the Board members.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A) Election of Chair

Mr. Lewis nominated Ms. Jester. There was no second.

Ms. Motter nominated Ms. Swift. Mr. Abhiraman seconded the motion. The motion carried by a vote of 4-0-1. Mr. Abhiraman, Ms. Jester, Ms. Motter, and Ms. Swift voted Aye. Mr. Lewis abstained.

B) Election of Vice-Chair

Chair Swift nominated Mr. Abhiraman. Ms. Motter seconded the motion. The motion carried by a vote of 3-0-2. Mr. Abhiraman, Ms. Motter, and Chair Swift voted Aye. Ms. Jester and Mr. Lewis abstained.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Vice-Chair Abhiraman, to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Vice-Chair Abhiraman, to approve the minutes of the June 8 meeting. The motion carried by a vote of 4-0-1. Vice-Chair Abhiraman abstained because he had not been present at the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Austin read the rules for public comment:

Public comments may be made in person or submitted by sending an email of one printed page or less at a minimum font of 12 to electionspubliccmnt@dekalbcountyga.gov which must be received between 35 and 5 minutes before the scheduled start of the meeting. The body of your email must include your first and last name. Abusive, profane, or derogatory language will not be permitted. By submitting an email for public comment, you agree to have your name and the email broadcast on the UStream and entered into the record and minutes. The DeKalb Board of Registration and Elections reserves the right, at the DeKalb Board of Registration and Elections' sole discretion, to (1) add your email to the record/minutes without reading any of it into the broadcast or (2) read all or a portion of your email into the record/minutes.

The following citizens provided public comment:

- Marci McCarthy
- Mrs. Heo, Soo Hyung
- Anar Parikh
- Naomi Bock
- Mahalet Awash
- Bimal Regmi
- Melissa Manrow

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A) Director's Report

Director Smith reported on registration, upcoming list maintenance activities, GARViS improvements, relocation of the warehouse, outreach events, the budget, and the upcoming poll worker appreciation event.

Ms. Jester asked for details surrounding the NGE mailing. Director Smith offered to find the specifics.

Mr. Lewis asked for information on a proposed audit. Mr. Phillips responded that he would discuss the matter with Mr. Lewis offline.

Mr. Lewis asked for an update on the Adopt-a-Precinct program and asked to be sure the initiative was allowable under the law. Director Smith responded with details and stated that the proposal is being reviewed by the law department.

Mr. Lewis asked if a membership had been paid to the Centers for Election Excellence. Director Smith responded that according to her understanding, the County had paid a membership fee.

Mr. Lewis asked about the break-in at the Stonecrest facility. Mr. Phillips recommended reserving comment until the investigation had concluded.

Mr. Lewis asked if the Adopt-a-Precinct guidelines could be published on the website. Director Smith responded that they would be.

Ms. Motter asked for the website to be updated to include instructions on how to request a ballot on a family member's behalf.

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Ms. Jester asked if the Board could be briefed on the Stonecrest investigation in an executive session. Mr. Phillips responded that he did not believe a criminal investigation could justify an executive session but offered to research further.

Ms. Jester asked for a copy of the executed agreement between the County and the Centers for Election Excellence.

Vice-Chair Abhiraman asked if the Department could use the full period of sixty days allowed by the law before the cancellation of a voter's registration who did not respond to an NGE mailing. Mr. Phillips offered to respond with a summary of the law.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

A) Resolution on Language Access

Director Smith requested to defer action on the resolution to the next meeting.

Ms. Motter asked if a county ordinance had been passed in addition to the resolution. Mr. Phillips offered to look into the matter.

Chair Swift asked what languages were being considered. Director Smith responded that the resolution requested coverage of nine languages.

Vice-Chair Abhiraman, Mr. Lewis, and Ms. Jester asked a series of questions about the timing involved.

Motion by Ms. Motter, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to defer action on the resolution until the December meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

B) Agreements to Conduct Municipal Elections

Director Smith requested authorization to execute agreements with municipalities related to the November election.

Motion by Ms. Motter that the Board authorize Director Smith to execute intergovernmental agreements and related documents in a form approved by the County Attorney or her designee between the Board and DeKalb County municipalities to facilitate municipal elections during the 2023 election cycle. The motion was seconded by Chair Swift.

Ms. Jester asked Director Smith to be sure that the cities understood the opportunity for advance voting.

The motion carried unanimously.

C) Polling Place Changes

Director Smith presented a list of polling place changes for the November election.

Motion by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Ms. Jester, to approve the changes.

Ms. Motter noted that Briarwood Recreation Center seemed to be unavailable frequently and asked if a more permanent solution could be found.

Chair Swift asked for future changes to be accompanied by a map.

Vice-Chair Abhiraman asked if any of the involved facilities charged the Department to host the election. Director Smith responded that she would look that up.

Ms. Motter asked the Director to check with the municipalities regarding any road closures.

The motion carried unanimously.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Lewis thanked the public for coming to the meeting.

Vice-Chair Abhiraman introduced himself and looked forward to working with all stakeholders and the voters of the county.

Ms. Motter thanked the Director, the County Attorneys, and the staff. She welcomed Vice-Chair Abhiraman and congratulated the new Chair.

Ms. Swift thanked the staff, the Director, and Mr. Phillips.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. Jester, seconded by Chair Swift, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:09 p.m.